

Long Beach - Signal Hill Geophysical Survey

• Geophysical Survey
This phase of the geophysical survey was completed on Wednesday, August 18th. Thanks to everyone in both cities for their...

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News / With Video

From India, Vice Mayor Suja Lowenthal Uses Internet To Participate In Council's Budget Oversight Committee Meeting



(Aug. 31, 2010) -- In a basically costless, near seamless use of consumer internet technology, Vice Mayor Suja Lowenthal today (Aug. 31) participated in the proceedings of the City Council's Budget Oversight Committee from a location in India, using the freely available, consumer level "Skype" internet platform.



City Clerk Larry Herrera and 2nd dist. Chief of Staff Broc Coward watch as staff uses a laptop to connect with the freely available "Skype" system and receive Vice Mayor Lowenthal's audio feed.

Audience members saw an empty chair but heard Vice Mayor Lowenthal's voice. Committee chair Councilman Gary DeLong and vice chair Councilman O'Donnell didn't highlight the fact that their colleague was in India...although her location was specified, as legally required, on the agenda itself. (LBReport.com spotted this prior to the meeting and previewed her likely upcoming use of the teleconference procedure).

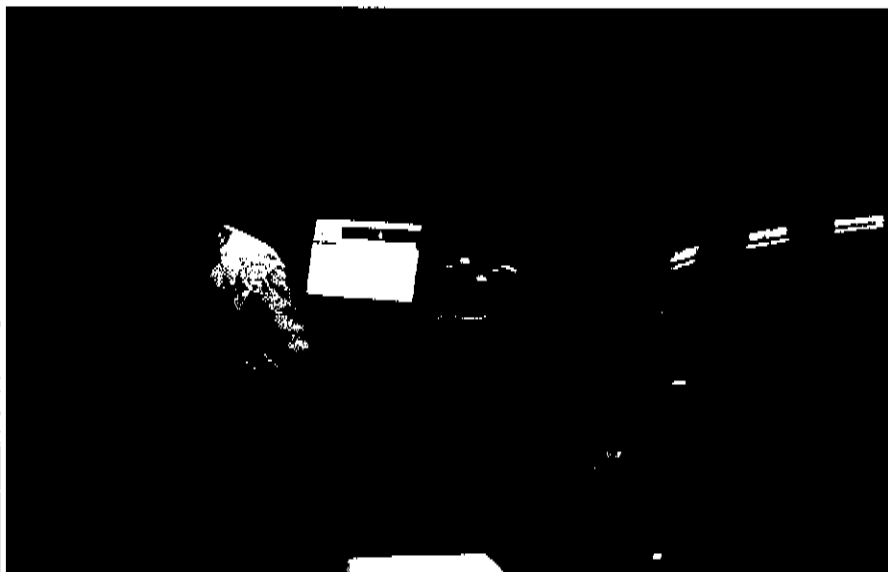
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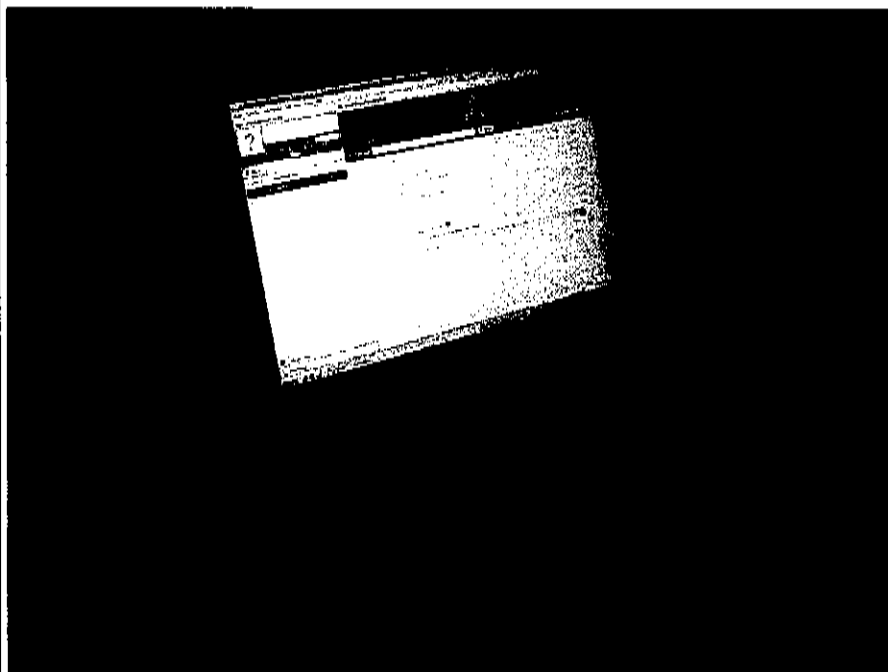
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Vice Mayor Lowenthal's voice, received on a laptop computer in the Council Chamber, was plugged into the Chamber's public address system and heard with broadcast quality clarity. She didn't send video but was able to receive both video and audio of the Council Chamber proceedings via an internet video link. Vice Mayor Lowenthal was also able simultaneously to communicate with the City Clerk via text messaging.



Committee chair DeLong paused after motions and Vice Mayor Lowenthal seconded several items with only a slight digital delay and also participated in discussions during the meeting.

Vice Mayor Lowenthal's location was at the Jai Mahal Palace in India.

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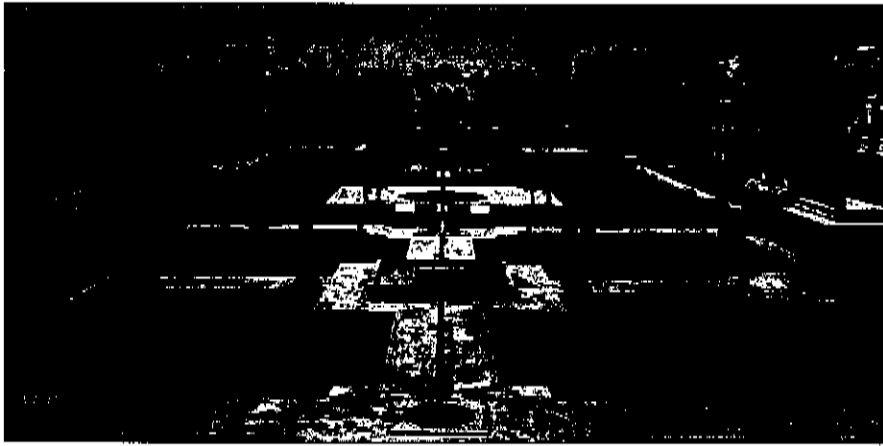


Image source: Jai Mahal Palace Hotel website

The meeting began at 4:30 p.m. Pacific Time Aug. 31, which was 5:00 a.m. Sept. 1 Indian Time.

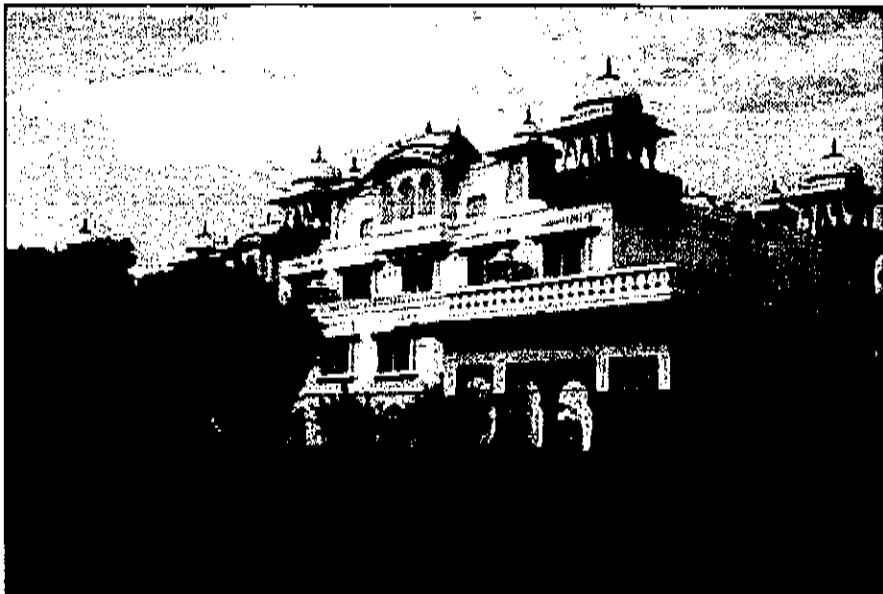


Image source: Jai Mahal Palace Hotel website

LB Director of Technology Services, Curtis Tani, said use of the "Skype" system was free.

City tested the system a day earlier, and it worked. A few minutes before the meeting began, city staff used a laptop to log into the "Skype" system, received Vice Mayor Lowenthal's audio feed, checked levels...and the Committee meeting began without comment by Committee Chair DeLong. To view video of the meeting's start and first roll call vote, [click here](#).

**LBReport.com** was first to report in July that Vice Mayor Lowenthal planned to be in India from late August through mid-September to attend two weddings. **LBReport.com** was also first to report on her participation in the Committee meeting from the Jai Mahal Palace Hotel in Jaipur, Rajasthan, India. luxury hotel in India.

Teleconference participation is allowed under CA's Brown (open meetings) Act in which members of government bodies can participate in public meetings from remote locations if the remote site complies with all open-meeting requirements including public notices, public access and the like.

The Budget Oversight Committee (DeLong, O'Donnell, Lowenthal) makes recommendations to the City Council, but its decisions aren't binding on the full Council (or on Committee members themselves in a full Council vote). A Council majority (five